

"Ye Are Not Under Law ..."

"For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

This conclusion (that it is a "conclusion" is evident by its beginning with the word "for") is drawn from two earlier statements in the paragraph. First it is urged, *"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lust thereof" (6:12)*. Because we are to reckon ourselves *"as dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ"* we must control our body. For sin to "reign" is for "sin" to control. Sin is "personified" as ruling in our moral body. The "mortal" body has certain appetites which seek to be filled. Those desires are not lessened by the fact that in certain circumstances, they are unlawful. The appetite is there. But "we" must rule over the appetite; refusing to satisfy it when that satisfying is contrary to God's will. Those who teach that those who are once saved can never be lost, sometimes claim, "My body sins but I don't." This bold claim is made in face of God's word to the contrary. For as Paul writes, *"Neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God,"* it is evident that the blame for sin must be laid at the feet of the inner man who controls the body. The body does nothing without consent of the inner man. To the inner man, both the responsibility for sin and chargeable penalty of it is his and his alone. Thus the apostle says, *"For sin shall not have dominion over you for ye are not under law, but under grace."*

Some read these words and conclude that man is under no law. That cannot be. There could not be sin if there was no law for *"sin is the transgression of law"* and *"where there is no law, neither is there transgression"* (1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:15). The fact that Paul urges us *"not to let sin reign in our mortal bodies"* and *"that we are not to present our members as instruments unto sin"* is proof positive we are under law.

What is the apostle's meaning, then? Where justification depends solely upon vindication by law all are consigned to be under sin's dominion; that is, the wages which sin pays -- death. *"For the wages of sin is death ..."* (Rom. 6:23) such is inevitably true for *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (3:23). Man's justification comes because grace is offered, yet justification is not solely by grace. Were this true, all those for whom Christ died would be saved. Thus none would be lost for Christ died for all. The offering of grace makes justification possible on some basis other than perfect law

keeping. Still, justification by grace does not remove the necessity of obedience (Heb. 5:9; 2 Thess. 1:7).

The statement, "*not under law but under grace*" was a Jewish idiom. We call this "not-but" an idiom; an expression in which one part of a statement is denied to emphasize the importance of the second. When these statements are found remember to consider it this way "not ONLY," but "ALSO." Thus Romans 6:14 becomes "*For ye are not (only) under law, but (also) under grace.*" See two other examples of this idiom in John 6:27 and 1 Corinthians 1:17.

Because grace is an essential portion of the law of Christ (Christ does have law, Gal. 6:2); if we neither let sin reign in our bodies, nor present our members as instruments of unrighteousness, sin will not have dominion over us! NEXT: "Know Ye Not."

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